



VFW 110th National Convention

Remarks by Governor Jan Brewer

Phoenix Convention Center

Monday, August 17, 2009

Thank you very much; and good morning, Veterans.

It is such an honor to be in this room with you today -- to be a part of this convention.

It is an honor to be here with General Hayden, Colonel Griffith, General OW-CHEV

Maj. Gen. Weldon, and General WAH-CHEW.

It is an honor to be here with each and every one of you -- because it is I who is inspired by YOU -- rather than the other way around.

I use the word "honor" carefully.

Because, here in Arizona, we HONOR veterans.

We honor you by never forgetting the service you have rendered.

Approximately, six-hundred-thousand veterans live here.

We know what you have done for that "sweet, enduring promise" we call the United States.

We understand -- especially in challenging economic times -- that we must do ALL we can to MEET those needs.

George Washington said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war -- no matter how justified -- shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the Veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their nation."

I recognize that serving our veterans depends on a working partnership between the Federal Government and the State.

Federal benefits and services must be equally available to ALL veterans, regardless of where they live -- and Federal and State governments must work together to achieve this mission.

We need more State Veterans' Cemeteries in Arizona to assure that any Arizona veteran can be buried in the state they love.

We need them in Yuma.

We need them in Tucson.

Here in Arizona, we have ONE Veterans' nursing home in Phoenix and have begun the process of building a second home in Tucson.

While our Counselors work very hard to connect Veterans with the benefits they have earned through their service, we often work at a disadvantage.

We don't have the information we need on new Veterans coming into our state.

The Department of Defense and the V-A need to SHARE information on returning service members with the State Departments of Veterans' Services.

Such sharing will allow us to better serve ALL returning Veterans, and allow us to direct them to every single aspect of federal, state and community resources available during their transition.

These are just a few of the things I think are necessary to ensure that our Veterans get all of the benefits to which they are entitled.

I do wish to commend the Federal V-A for the steps it is taking to become more efficient in providing needed services and benefits to our Veterans.

But, most of all, I wish to commend YOU -- men and women of the Veterans of Foreign Wars -- for collectively being THE voice that is heard in Washington on behalf of ALL of our veterans -- from those who served in the European theater of operations in World War Two -- to those who are serving now in places even farther away from their homes and families.

On the 40th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, President Ronald Reagan spoke at the site of the U.S. Ranger Monument in France.

He told the Veterans of the Normandy Invasion, that in 1944 – quote -- some of you were hardly more than boys, with the deepest joys of life before you.

Yet, you risked everything here. Why? Why did you do it?

Reagan knew the answer. It is one we all know.

But YOU in this room know it better than anyone.

We look at you, and somehow we know the answer.

It was faith and belief.

It was loyalty and love.

Reagan went on to say – and his words are worth remembering here – because they apply to all of you -- the Veterans had FAITH that what they were doing was right -- FAITH that they fought for all humanity -- FAITH that a just God would grant them mercy on whatever beachhead they faced.

And so, I say, again, it is an HONOR to be with you, because of who you are, because of what you've done for this country.

Our goals are the same and shall always be the same.

Secure the nation.

Preserve the peace.

And ensure that ALL who have done that -- receive not just the THANKS of our nation -- but ALL of the benefits to which their service has entitled them.

Thank you.

And God bless you.

God bless Arizona.

And God bless the United States of America.